



# VERSUS

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@DailyCollegian

No. 1 OREGON (12-0)  
DUCKS

(11-1) No. 3 PENN STATE  
NITTANY LIONS



# Lions Ducks and Championships Oh My!



Graphic by: Isabella Viteri  
Photos by: Sienna Pinney, Kate Hildebrand, Max Petrosky, AP Photo/Lydia Ely





Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**Players** sing the alma mater after the Penn State football game against Maryland on Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024 in Beaver Stadium in University Park, Pa. The Nittany Lions beat the Terrapins 44-7.

# A BIG opportunity

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State and James Franklin have preached the “1-0 mentality” to the point where it sounds like a broken record. But it has purpose, allowing the squad to focus on the next game no matter the circumstances.

While the team focused on its game against Maryland, a win against the Terrapins would’ve sent the Nittany Lions to Indianapolis for the Big Ten Championship against Oregon, paired with a Michigan win over Ohio State. The Wolverines were over-matched against the No. 2 Buckeyes on paper but ultimately faltered, allowing Penn State to play next Saturday.

“Definitely rooting for Michigan a little bit, but they got the job done, and they put us in a position where we can go win the Big Ten,” defensive end Abdul Carter said. “That’s what we’re gonna do.”

It seemed like a long shot to be competing at Lucas Oil Stadium after Penn State lost to Ohio State during the regular season, but there was light at the end of the tunnel for the Nittany Lions, who earned the right to a tiebreaker over Indiana after the Hoosiers fell to the Buckeyes last week. An

unlikely Michigan win over Ohio State was all Penn State needed, and it happened.

“This is why you come to a place like Penn State, to have opportunities like this, and to have moments like this, ones that you’ll never forget, in general for the rest of your life,” quarterback Drew Allar said. “We’re super excited for the opportunity that we have ahead of us, and we know it’s gonna be a huge challenge because of the team that we’re going against.”

Franklin and the staff knew Michigan had won, but he didn’t want the players to know that. At the end of the day, the “1-0 mentality” needed to be reinforced.

“I didn’t say anything to the team. Actually, I did the opposite. I said, Maryland, Maryland, Maryland, Maryland, Maryland, Maryland, Maryland, Maryland,” Franklin said. “I think a lot of people were aware of it and are trying to keep us focused.”

When the clock ticked down and the scoreboard flashed zeros, Penn State sealed its fate and booked a trip to Indianapolis.

Franklin broke it down for the team with the bad news first, then followed it up with the good news.

“The bad news is that we were supposed to have practice off to-

morrow, day off,” Franklin said. “We do not have the day off anymore. We’ll be back tomorrow morning.”

Safety Jaylen Reed pointed at the scoreboard postgame and started smiling, though he had to cancel a Sunday plan to head to New York because of practice. Allar soaked the moment in alongside teammates Drew Shelton and Dominic Rulli, but one of the most grateful players was sixth-year Dvon J-Thomas, who wore leis given to him by his family.

“It’s a huge feeling of excitement that’s overwhelming right now,” J-Thomas said.

“I don’t even know how to put it into words.”

With the helping hand of Michigan and Penn State handling business the rest of the regular season, the Nittany Lions will head to Lucas Oil Stadium for a shot at the Big Ten Championship for the first time since 2016.

“We always talk about winning the Big Ten championship,” running back Nick Singleton said. Then just everything’s still in front of us, like I said so. Gotta go out, have a great practice throughout the whole week and everything will take care of itself.”

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# RING CHASING

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State has an empty trophy case sitting in its team meeting room. It’s not hidden or tucked away, it’s in a spot the players walk by every day.

With the Big Ten championship set for Saturday, the Nittany Lions would love for the conference championship trophy to be put in that case.

“We’ve always had an empty case in there on purpose, because we have goals and aspirations and we want to win,” linebacker Tony Rojas said.

The squad has always had the trophy case sitting in the team meeting room. While the goal is ultimately a national championship, Michigan’s win over Ohio State last weekend thrust Penn State into the Big Ten championship game.

“Obviously that would be big, just a ring for us as players, that’s huge,” Rojas said. “And just the culture around here, that’d be amazing.”

Penn State hasn’t had a win over a top-10 team since the 2022 Rose Bowl, when it dethroned No. 8 Utah. Since then, the unit has lost to a ranked Ohio State team twice, a ranked Michigan and a ranked Ole Miss in the 2024 Peach Bowl.

The Nittany Lions are hungry for a big-time win, and to fill that trophy case with some hardware.

“Just motivation to go put a trophy in there,” cornerback Jalen Kimber said. “Something that we can do. We’re confident that we can go do this. Why not go make history?”

The last time Penn State was

in the Big Ten championship was 2016, when it came out victorious over Wisconsin. The Nittany Lions haven’t competed for a conference championship since, so a win could do wonders for the program.

“It’s exciting, it’s gonna do good things for our program, not only like this year, but in the years moving forward,” left tackle Drew Shelton said. “But obviously right now, just focus on going to win.”

On top of future benefits, a win can show the college football world that Penn State can compete with the very best.

“Just confidence, building up, competing, knowing that we can compete with the top dogs in our conference,” Shelton said.

There are long-term implications that could provide great value from this win, regardless of how Penn State performs in the College Football Playoffs. Franklin is aware of the benefits a victory can bring, but his focus is on Oregon.

“We’re excited to play Oregon. Great opportunity playing the No. 1 team in the country,” Franklin said. “We’re excited about that. That’s what we control. That’s what we’re focused on, not focused on anything else.”

For now, Penn State has all its attention on filling the empty trophy case sitting in the team meeting room when it comes back to Happy Valley.

“It’s been a long time since we won a Big Ten championship,” Kimber said. So just go out there and make history. It’s just motivation that’s all it is.”

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Kayla McCullough/Collegian

**Linebacker Tony Rojas (13)** talks to media after football practice in Holuba Hall on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024 in University Park, Pa.

OREGON DUCKS											
No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Tysheem Johnson	DB/Sr.	17	Jay Harris	RB/Jr.	38	Will Straton	LB/Fr.	73	Kawika Rogers	OL/So.
1	Jordan Burch	DE/Sr.	17	Kyler Kasper	WR/So.	39	Dane Sipos	DB/Jr.	74	Dave Iuli	OL/So.
1	Traeshon Holden	WR/Sr.	17	Blake Purchase	LB/So.	40	Kade Caton	TE/Fr.	75	JacQuan McRoy	OL/Fr.
2	Jeffrey Bassa	LB/Sr.	18	Kenyon Sadiq	TE/So.	42	Aydin Breland	DL/Fr.	76	Josh Conerly Jr.	OL/Jr.
2	Gary Bryant Jr.	WR/Jr.	19	Ryder Hayes	QB/Fr.	43	Luke Basso	SN/Jr.	77	Matthew Bedford	OL/Sr.
3	Terrance Ferguson	TE/Sr.	19	Tyler Turner	DB/Fr.	44	Zach Grace	TE/Fr.	77	Jericho Johnson	DL/Fr.
3	Brandon Johnson	DB/Sr.	20	Jordan James	RB/Jr.	44	Teitum Tuioti	LB/So.	78	Gernorris Wilson	OL/Fr.
4	Jestin Jacobs	LB/Sr.	20	Dylan Williams	LB/Fr.	45	Luke Dunne	P/Fr.	79	Lipe Maola	OL/Fr.
5	Dante Moore	QB/So.	21	Aaron Flowers	DB/Fr.	46	Chip Allers	LB/Fr.	80	Dillon Gresham	WR/Fr.
5	Kobe Savage	DB/Sr.	21	Da'Jaun Riggs	RB/Fr.	47	Elijah Rushing	LB/Fr.	80	Jaxson Jones	LB/Fr.
6	Jahlil Florence	DB/Jr.	22	Connor Soelle	LB/Sr.	50	Tionne Gray	DL/Fr.	81	Ryan Pellum	WR/Fr.
6	Noah Whittington	RB/Jr.	23	Ellis Bynum	RB/So.	50	Nishad Strother	OL/Sr.	83	Roger Saleapaga	TE/Fr.
7	Jabbar Muhammad	DB/Sr.	23	Brayden Platt	LB/Fr.	52	A'Mauri Washington	DL/So.	84	Jack Ressler	WR/Fr.
7	Evan Stewart	WR/Jr.	24	Kingston Lopa	DB/Fr.	53	Devin Brooks	OL/Fr.	85	Travis Brashear	WR/Fr.
8	Dillon Gabriel	QB/Sr.	24	Jalen Saint Paul	WR/Fr.	54	Jerry Mixon	LB/So.	86	Darrian Anderson	WR/So.
8	Dontae Manning	DB/Sr.	25	Brison Cobbins	RB/Jr.	55	Derrick Harmon	DL/Jr.	87	A.J. Pugliano	TE/Fr.
9	Nikko Reed	DB/Sr.	25	Ify Obidegwu	DB/Fr.	55	Marcus Harper II	OL/Sr.	88	Patrick Herbert	TE/Sr.
10	Luke Moga	QB/Fr.	26	Devon Jackson	LB/So.	56	Trent Ferguson	OL/Fr.	88	Xadavien Sims	DL/Fr.
10	Matayo Uiagalelei	LB/So.	27	Daylen Austin	DB/Fr.	56	Jaedan Moore	OL/Fr.	89	Brady Bidwell	WR/Fr.
11	Kam Alexander	DB/Sr.	27	Jayden Limar	RB/So.	59	Fox Crader	OL/Fr.	90	Jamaree Caldwell	DL/Sr.
11	Dakoda Fields	DB/Sr.	28	Preston Alford	WR/So.	60	Kanan Rossi	OL/Jr.	92	Ross James	P/Jr.
11	Jeremiah McClellan	WR/Fr.	28	Bryce Boettcher	LB/Sr.	61	JaJuan Dickey	DL/So.	93	My'Keil Gardner	DL/Fr.
12	Brock Thomas	QB/Fr.	29	Kilohana Haasenritter	RB/Jr.	62	Holden Whipple	OL/Jr.	93	Grant Meadors	K/Fr.
12	Peyton Woodyard	DB/Fr.	29	Ashton Porter	LB/Fr.	64	Ty Delgado	OL/So.	94	Tyler Kinsman	P/Fr.
13	Jurrior Dickey	WR/Fr.	30	Xavier Barksdale	DB/Fr.	65	Ajani Cornelius	OL/Sr.	95	Keyon Ware-Hudson	DT/Sr.
13	Sione Laulea	DB/Jr.	31	Zach Grisham	DB/So.	66	Bryce Boulton	OL/Fr.	96	Nick Duzansky	SN/Fr.
14	Justius Lowe	WR/So.	32	Emar'rion Winston	LB/So.	67	Beau Cressallen	OL/Fr.	97	Gage Hurych	K/Fr.
14	Khamari Terrell	DB/Jr.	33	Kamar Mothudi	LB/Fr.	68	Auston Mims	OL/Fr.	97	Josh Simmons	DL/Sr.
15	Solomon Davis	DB/Fr.	34	Cruz Rushing	DB/So.	69	Bailey Jaramillo	OL/Jr.	98	Andrew Boyle	K/Sr.
15	Tez Johnson	WR/Sr.	35	Jacob Pruitt	DB/Fr.	70	Charlie Pickard	OL/Jr.	99	Terrance Gren	DL/Fr.
16	Austin Novosad	QB/Fr.	36	Timon Davis	DB/Jr.	71	George Silva	OL/Sr.			
16	Rodrick Pleasant	DB/So.	36	Atticus Sappington	K/Jr.	72	Iapani Laloulu	OL/So.			

PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS											
No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Dominic DeLuca	LB/Jr.	18	Joey Schlaffer	TE/Fr.	42	Mason Robinson	DE/Fr.	74	J'ven Williams	OL/Fr.
1	Jaylen Reed	S/Sr.	18	Max Granville	DE/Fr.	43	Tyler Elsdon	LB/Sr.	75	Matt Detisch	OL/So.
2	Liam Clifford	WR/Jr.	19	Josiah Brown	WR/Fr.	44	Jaylen Harvey	DE/Fr.	76	Mason Carlan	OL/Sr.
2	Kevin Winston Jr.	S/Jr.	19	Jack Lambert	QB/Fr.	44	Tyler Warren	TE/Sr.	77	Sal Wormley	OL/Sr.
3	Julian Fleming	WR/Sr.	20	Mylachi Williams	DE/Fr.	45	Jackson Pryts	LB/So.	79	Addison Penn	OL/Sr.
3	Jalen Kimber	CB/Sr.	21	Vaboue Toure	S/Fr.	47	Will Patton	SN/Fr.	80	Mehki Flowers	WR/So.
4	Tyseer Denmark	WR/Fr.	23	Antoine Belgrave-Shorter	CB/Fr.	47	Aidan Probst	DE/Fr.	82	Ethan Black	WR/Fr.
4	A.J. Harris	CB/So.	24	Ta'Mere Robinson	LB/Fr.	48	Tyler Duzansky	SN/So.	83	Jake Spencer	WR/Sr.
5	Omari Evans	WR/Jr.	24	Corey Smith	RB/Fr.	49	Ben Chizmar	LB/Jr.	84	Peter Gonzalez	WR/Fr.
5	Cam Miller	CB/Jr.	25	Quinton Martin Jr.	RB/Fr.	50	Cooper Cousins	OL/Fr.	85	Luke Reynolds	TE/Fr.
6	Harrison Wallace III	WR/Jr.	26	Cam Wallace	RB/Fr.	50	Alonzo Ford Jr.	DT/Sr.	86	Jason Estrella	WR/Jr.
6	Zakee Wheatley	S/Jr.	27	Lamont Payne Jr.	CB/Fr.	51	Hakeem Beamon	DT/Sr.	86	Aaron Enterline	WR/Fr.
7	Kaden Saunders	WR/So.	28	Zane Durant	DT/Jr.	52	Dominic Rulli	OL/So.	87	Andrew Rappleyea	WR/Fr.
7	Zion Tracy	CB/So.	28	Karson Kiesewetter	QB/Fr.	53	Nick Dawkins	OL/Sr.	88	Sam Sifa	DT/So.
8	Tyler Johnson	WR/So.	29	Audavion Collins	CB/So.	54	Xavier Gilliam	DT/Fr.	89	Finn Furmanek	TE/Fr.
8	DaKaari Nelson	S/Fr.	30	Amiel Davis	RB/So.	54	Ian Harvie	OL/So.	90	Liam Andrews	DT/Fr.
9	Beau Pribula	QB/So.	30	Kari Jackson	LB/Fr.	55	Chimdy Onoh	OL/Fr.	91	Dvon J-Thomas	DT/Sr.
10	Nick Singleton	RB/So.	31	Logan Cunningham	WR/So.	56	Joseph Mupoyi	DT/Fr.	91	Chase Meyer	K/Jr.
10	Dejuan Lane	S/Fr.	31	Kolin Dinkins	CB/So.	56	JB Nelson	OL/Sr.	92	Andrew Dufault	SN/Fr.
11	Abdul Carter	DE/Jr.	32	Keon Wylie	LB/So.	57	Donnie Harbour	OL/Fr.	92	Smith Vilbert	DE/Sr.
12	Anthony Ivey	WR/So.	33	Dani Dennis-Sutton	DE/Jr.	58	Kaleb Artis	DT/So.	93	Bobby Mears	DE/Fr.
12	Jon Mitchell	CB/Fr.	34	Tyler Holzworth	RB/Jr.	60	Logan Bahn	OL/Fr.	93	Sander Sahaydak	K/Jr.
13	Kaytron Allen	RB/Jr.	35	Blaise Sokach-Minnick	SN/So.	61	Liam Horan	OL/Fr.	94	Ryan Barker	K/Fr.
13	Tony Rojas	LB/So.	35	Tyler Armstead	CB/Fr.	63	Alex Birchmeier	OL/Fr.	94	De'Andre Cook	DT/Fr.
14	Tyrece Mills	S/Jr.	36	Zuriah Fisher	DE/Jr.	64	Eagan Boyer	OL/Fr.	95	Jordan Mayer	DE/Fr.
14	Jaxon Smolik	QB/Fr.	36	Feyisayo Oluleye	WR/Sr.	65	Jim Fitzgerald	OL/So.	95	Riley Thompson	P/Jr.
15	Drew Allar	QB/So.	37	Beckham Dee	LB/Fr.	66	Drew Shelton	OL/Jr.	96	Mitchell Groh	P/Jr.
15	Amin Vanover	DE/Sr.	38	Winston Yates	LB/Fr.	67	Henry Boehme	OL/Fr.	97	T.A. Cunningham	DT/Fr.
16	Khalil Dinkins	TE/So.	39	Ty Blanding	DT/Fr.	68	Anthony Donkoh	OL/Fr.	99	Coziah Izzard	DT/So.
16	Elliot Washington II	CB/Fr.	39	Jashaun Green	S/So.	70	Garrett Sexton	OL/Fr.	99	Gabriel Nwosu	P/So.
17	Karson Kiesewetter	QB/Fr.	40	Anthony Specia	LB/Fr.	71	Vega Ioane	OL/So.			
17	Ethan Grunkemeyer	QB/Fr.	40	Patrick Williams	S/So.	72	Nolan Rucci	OL/Jr.			
17	Kenny Woseley Jr.	CB/Fr.	41	Kobe King	LB/Jr.	73	Caleb Brewer	OL/Fr.			



# Allar returns to Indy

Lexie Linderman  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In 2013, Drew Allar sat in the stands of Lucas Oil Stadium to watch Ohio State take on Michigan State in the Big Ten Championship as a fan of the Buckeyes.

Eleven years later to the day, Allar will take the field in Indianapolis on Saturday to play in a Big Ten Championship of his own after his home-state school's loss to Michigan gave Penn State a berth in the conference title.

Although Allar hasn't been back to Lucas Oil Stadium since that trip when he was still in grade school, he's watched the Big Ten Championship every year since.

"I don't know when's the last time I haven't watched the Big Ten Championship, to be honest," Allar said. "That kind of goes for all the conference championships. I just love watching football, so it kind of plays into that. Whenever I can watch football, I'm usually watching it."

It marks the third NFL stadium Allar will play in the past two years.

The Nittany Lions played in both Ford Field and Mercedes-Benz Stadium in 2023, both of which the quarterback said were "cool experiences."

However, the stakes for Saturday's game are higher than any game Allar has played in before. If Penn State wins, it'll secure an automatic bid and bye for the College Football Playoff, likely as the No. 1 seed. Additionally, a win would mark the Nittany Lions' first Big Ten Championship in eight years.

Despite what's on the line, Allar said this week isn't "any different" for the team, with the Nittany Lions treating their upcoming matchup against Oregon as they would any other.

"I think overall, we're a really



Joey Tiger/Collegian

**Quarterback Drew Allar** walks off the bus outside Beaver Stadium before the Penn State football game against Maryland on Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024. The Nittany Lions defeated the Terrapins 44-7.

focused team, just by nature and how we're all wired," Allar said. "We're super focused throughout the week, but when it's time to go to the game and play, I think we play loose and free, just more naturally, just because of how focused we were throughout the week."

What they're focused on this week, though, just happens to be the No. 1 and only undefeated team in the country. The Ducks are the toughest group Penn State has faced since its Nov. 2 matchup against Ohio State.

Allar said he has "a lot of respect for them as players and their whole coaching staff," and knows "it's going to be a fun challenge" to face Oregon.

The Ducks' defense has tallied 39 sacks this season, forced 17 fumbles and has allowed just 16.7 points per game.

What impressed Allar the most during film study was the speed and size of Oregon's entire defense, but specifically the Ducks' defensive line.

"They're really big up front in terms of height and weight, but they're also, like, you wouldn't expect them to move how they do move up front," Allar said. "Their starting four up front is a really talented group, and they're really disruptive in both the running and pass games, so we're going to need to do a really good job up front this week."

On the flip side, the Ducks are

preparing to face Allar and Penn State's offense. Oregon linebacker Jeff Bassa said he knows Penn State "has a veteran quarterback" who's been "doing a great job" leading the Nittany Lions' offense.

Meanwhile, Oregon coach Dan Lanning cited Allar's composure as "one of the things that sticks out," which is noticeably an aspect of the quarterback has taken strides in this season.

"He's also a guy that's made some really great throws in some tight windows this year," Lanning said. "I think he understands his personnel and his strengths, knows who he wants to get the ball to. But more than anything, just a composed operator, you

know, he goes out there and can execute at a really high level and create explosive plays."

The Big Ten Championship is now just four days away, and while Allar is focused on going 1-0 on Saturday as always, he knows the opportunity presented to Penn State and the environment that awaits the Nittany Lions in Indianapolis.

"I think it's just a really cool environment that we're going to be in," Allar said. "I know it's going to be a fully packed house from both teams traveling really well. So it'll be a really cool environment just to be in."

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## Singleton picks up steam

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State will return to the Big Ten Championship for the first time since 2016 on Saturday. The last time the Nittany Lions were in the conference title, Nick Singleton was in middle school.

The Shillington, Pennsylvania, native watched the game rooting for his in-state team, imagining what it would be like competing at the national stage in a game of that caliber.

"I always imagined my shoes, like being in that moment, trying to win a Big Ten Championship," Singleton said. "So being exactly in that moment right now just feels good, and we gotta go out there and win it."

Eight years later, Penn State will return to the conference championship to clash with Oregon, trying to replicate the performance it had in 2016, when the Nittany Lions dethroned Wisconsin 38-31 behind four touchdown passes from quarterback Trace McSorley.

Singleton knows the opportunity that the team has in front of it, but defeating the Ducks to earn some hardware won't be an easy task.

"I'd say there's an incredible opportunity," Singleton said. "We're in the Big Ten Championship, competing soon for an op-

portunity moving forward. But just competing for the Big Ten Championship against Oregon. Obviously a good team, great athletes, so we're looking forward for the matchup."

The Oregon front seven will pose a tough task for Penn State's ground game. Last week against Washington, the Ducks proved that they can get to the backfield in a hurry, totaling 10 sacks and only allowing 43 rushing yards against the Huskies.

Singleton has respect for the Oregon defense and knows it won't be an easy task to find success.

"They're a really good defense. They get fast to the ball," Singleton said. "They just play as a group that's together. So they've been really good."

The junior said the offense is feeling confident and they "have a good plan" for how to attack the Oregon defense.

While Penn State has respect for the defense it's set to face on Saturday, the respect is mutual from Oregon and certainly for the threat that Singleton possesses.

"Nick Singleton is one of the best backs in the country," Oregon linebacker Jeffrey Bassa said. "So very excited for this matchup, especially me as a linebacker going up against the top running back. That's always something that you dream

for, and you look for."

While Bassa is excited for the chance to compete against Singleton, he's ready to show the running back what he's made of.

"I'm really stoked for this matchup," Bassa said. "I'm going to be playing my heart out. I know that. I know that for sure."

Singleton has battled injuries throughout the season, limiting his performance at times. He also struggled to start against Maryland, fumbling on the first play from scrimmage, but then bounced back on his next touch taking a kickoff return for 66 yards, then fishing the game with 13 carries for 87 yards and two touchdowns.

"Nick is back as close to 100% as he's been in a long time, and you see the burst and the acceleration on tape," James Franklin said.

While No. 1 Oregon is going to be Penn State's toughest test to date, Singleton and Co. are ready for the challenge and feel like they're building momentum at the right time.

"I just feel like we're at the right moment," Singleton said. "We just gotta keep continuing doing it. And I feel like on Saturday everything will take care of itself."

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Kate Hildebrand/Collegian

**Cornerback Jalen Kimber** makes a tackle during the Penn State football game against Maryland in Beaver Stadium.

## Penn State ready for Oregon offense

By Lexie Linderman  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In 2022, Florida cornerback Jalen Kimber watched Texas A&M wide receiver Evan Stewart tally 120 receiving yards in the Gators' win over the Aggies.

Two years later, Kimber is playing for Penn State, while Stewart is an Oregon Duck, and the pair will face off once again in the Big Ten Championship.

"He's a savvy route runner, and he's well experienced," Kimber said. "He knows how to get in and out of his breaks, you know, he's just an overall good wide receiver that understands the game."

Stewart, who's accumulated 618 yards and five touchdowns this season, is just one of a few elite wide receivers Oregon has on its roster. Another is Tez Johnson, who has 685 yards and nine touchdowns in 2024.

As a group, Kimber said the Ducks' receivers are "well-rounded," but pointed specifically to their route-running as an area of strength. Regardless, the challenge is something that excites Kimber.

"You always want to go against the best. It's something that I always dreamed of, going against the best, because you're able to go out there and show what you're capable of," Kimber said. "That's what we're ready to do. We're just ready to go out there and show what we're capable of."

Throwing to Stewart and Johnson is Oklahoma transfer Dillon Gabriel. The gunslinger is currently in his sixth year playing college football and was named the Big Ten's Griese-Brees Quarterback of the Year and Graham-George Offensive Player of the Year on Tuesday.

"It seems like he's been playing college football for like, the last 10 years, and he's just so poised and relaxed," James

Franklin said. "You're not going to give him a whole lot that he hasn't seen before, and he's surrounded with really good talent. The running backs are really good. The tight end is a really good player. The receivers are dynamic ... You very rarely ever see him get rattled."

Linebacker Tony Rojas said Gabriel's arm talent sticks out to him as "one of the best" the Nittany Lions' have seen this season, but the sophomore is confident in his defense's abilities.

"We just gotta apply pressure and I think we'll be good," Rojas said.

The gunslinger's arm is just one aspect of his game that makes him a threat, however: Gabriel is nifty in the pocket and can extend most plays with his legs, so Kimber said Penn State "can't let him escape."

Gabriel cited his journey from UCF to Oklahoma and finally to Oregon as something he's benefited from.

He said he was a "sponge," which helped him get better every year.

"I've also tried to just pour my everything into wherever I was in that moment," Gabriel said. "So I think that's allowed me to get better every year, every single version of myself ... I think that that goes to show the leader, a person, a player (I am)."

In going against Gabriel and Oregon's offense, Kimber knows "every point matters, every yard matters," and is ready to take the field at Lucas Oil Stadium like it's his last opportunity.

"Everything matters in these big games like this," Kimber said. "You just got to be really locked in on what you're doing. Can't go out there and think that you might have another opportunity, because you might not have another opportunity."

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Kate Hildebrand/Collegian

**Running back Nick Singleton** stiff arms a defender during the Penn State football game against Maryland on Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024 in Beaver Stadium. The Nittany Lions defeated the Terrapins 44-7.



# ‘HE WREAKS HAVOC’

## Abdul Carter provides nightmare fuel for opposing defenses

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The NFL Scouting Combine has been hosted at Lucas Oil Stadium since 2008. Penn State will make the trip to the venue on Saturday for the Big Ten championship, but it won't be long until the Nittany Lions have their own players participate in the combine, hoping to strengthen their case to hear their name called in the NFL Draft.

One of those players is defensive end Abdul Carter, and he's seen his draft stock skyrocket.

He's currently a finalist for the Chuck Bednarik Award, Lombardi Award and the Bronko Nagurski Trophy. Carter was also named the Nagurski-Woodson Defensive Player of the Year, making him the first Nittany Lion to win the award since Carl Nassib did it in 2015, and paired it with the Smith-Brown Defensive Lineman of the Year and Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year.

"I feel like for my game, there's always an area to improve on," Carter said postgame against Maryland. "There's never going to be a time where you got to figure it out. I don't want to be too high on myself. I always want to just find ways to keep getting better."

While Carter won't say much about the dominant performanc-



**Defensive end Abdul Carter (11)** celebrates a sack during the Penn State football game against Maryland on Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024 in Beaver Stadium. The Nittany Lions defeated the Terrapins 44-7.

es he delivers on an every Saturday basis, his play does the talking for him. While his play speaks volumes, there's been no discussion as to what Carter's future has in store at Penn State.

Will he return for his senior season, or with his name being mentioned as a shoe-in first round pick, take his talents to the NFL Draft?

"I'm focused on the season right now," Carter said on Big

Ten Network on Tuesday. "I'm focused on the next game. We got the Big Ten championship, the playoffs after that. Everything else concerning the NFL, that's going to be there later after the season."

So with his decision regarding staying in college or pursuing an NFL career in the back of his mind, Carter is focused on the task at hand and has his sights set on Oregon.

But just like Carter has his attention on the Ducks, Oregon has its attention on the defensive end.

"He's certainly a guy that's showing physicality and the ability to play all over the field," Oregon coach Dan Lanning said. "So somebody you have to be aware of, right?"

It's not just Lanning who has his eyes on Carter. Quarterback Dillon Gabriel knows the threat that Carter has off of the edge.

The gunslinger made it clear after an initial session of film study that game planning for No. 11 is a necessity because of what he can do on the defensive line.

"He wreaks havoc," Gabriel said. "He's a disruptive player, extremely physical. But also, I think his ability to go from extremely physical to finesse and speed — I think it's pretty impressive."

Carter recently posted a picture of the Heisman Trophy on Instagram.

When asked, he said he respects what Colorado wide receiver/cornerback Travis Hunter and Boise State running back Ashton Jeanty have been doing this season, but feels like he deserves some noise for the award, mimicking the pose after drilling Maryland quarterback MJ Morris to the ground on a sack.

"Real talk," defensive tackle Dvon J'Thomas interjected in support while Carter was talking.

Whether he gets recognition for the Heisman Trophy or not, Penn State knows how good he is, Oregon knows how good he is, and Carter has a chance to prove it to the world on Saturday.

"The Heisman is the top player in the country, the best player in the country, and I feel like I'm that," Carter said.

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# ‘I’m the best in the country’

## Jaylen Reed searches for recognition ahead of postseason

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State safety Jaylen Reed and Oregon backup quarterback Dante Moore know each other pretty well. The duo suited up for Martin Luther King High School in Detroit, competing against each other in practice with Moore trying to direct an offense downfield to score on a defensive that featured Reed headlining the secondary.

Moore started on the team as a freshman, but when Reed was asked at Big Ten Media Day about going against the gunslinger, the safety said he didn't score on him. "Oh no," Reed said. "Not on me."

The former teammates became highly touted recruits, as Reed pledged to Penn State as a 4-star and No. 18 safety in the country while Moore was a 5-star and No. 5 player overall nationally.

Reed is in his fourth year at Penn State while Moore is in his second collegiate season, transferring from UCLA to Oregon last offseason. The pair stay in touch, and after an unlikely scenario where Michigan beat Ohio State, the pair will reunite in the Big Ten Championship on Saturday.

"Dante is a great guy," Reed said at Big Ten Media Day. "I'm looking forward to seeing him in Oregon and seeing what he does there. I wish him the best, pray for him. I still talk to him every day — we played NCAA the other day."

Ever since the tandem started lacing up their cleats together, Reed was aware of how talented Moore would be. He was a crucial part of Martin Luther King High School's 11-3 record in 2019, which included a runner-up finish in Michigan Division II.

"He started competing early," Reed said. "He did a great job of coming in when we were in high

school, capturing the starting spot and taking advantage of every opportunity."

After going 114-for-213 on passing attempts for 1,610 yards and 11 touchdowns to nine interceptions in rookie campaign at UCLA, he took a backseat to current Oregon quarterback Dillon Gabriel.

Even though the former teammate of Reed will be in a reserve role, Gabriel knows the threat he possesses in the secondary. The gunslinger said he already talked to Moore about Reed.

"That's been talked about," Gabriel said. "Knowing that he has been a great player and has done very well for himself so far. He is excited about the challenge. He's definitely a ballhawk, is always on the ball and a very good tackler."

Gabriel isn't the only Duck who knows the impact Reed can have in the title game. Tight end Terrance Ferguson, who will likely draw Reed in coverage and have to block him, offered some insight on what Reed brings to the table when watching film.

"He's good in coverage and attacks the ball," Ferguson said. "I'm looking forward to playing against these guys, because they are elite players and the best players are playing against the best players."

Reed has made it clear this season he feels like he's been deserving of more national recognition than he's been receiving. He's taken to social media to express his feelings, and has a chance to show everyone what he's capable of on the biggest stage on Saturday.

"I'm about to show the world that I'm the best safety in the country," Reed said postgame against Maryland.

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**Penn State football coach James Franklin** talks to media after football practice in Holuba Hall on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024 in University Park, Pa.

## Franklin, Lanning preview matchup

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In a surprising turn of events this weekend, Michigan upset Ohio State in a rivalry matchup. With a tiebreaker over Indiana in Penn State's favor, the Nittany Lions' win over Maryland clinched a spot in the Big Ten Championship in Indianapolis this upcoming Saturday.

Penn State will clash with No. 1 ranked Oregon, which already solidified a spot in the conference championship as the only team to finish the regular season undefeated in the FBS.

Ahead of the matchup, James Franklin and Oregon coach Dan Lanning spoke to the media ahead of the title game.

### Opportunity

While the path to the Big Ten Championship was different for each team, both coaches are grateful for the chance to play for a conference title.

Lanning said that Penn State is "not comparable" to any team that the Ducks have faced this year.

"Certainly excited about the opportunity to go compete against a great team in Penn State. I know our players are really excited about it," Lanning said. "This has been a fun season for us, but there's some real challenges that they present now. I think we talk about trying to play your best ball at the end of season, and that's the position

that we're in right now, but we're going against the team that's playing really good ball as well."

Just like Lanning, Franklin knows what the matchup on Saturday means for the program.

"Just excited about the opportunity, obviously, to represent Penn State and our fans and our lettermen and come to Indianapolis and have a chance to compete against an unbelievable opponent in Oregon," Franklin said.

### Mutual respect

When given the opportunity on Zoom, each coach gave the other their flowers. Lanning and Franklin had no previous relationship other than crossing paths at Big Ten Media Day, but it was evident the respect they have for each other.

"Coach Lanning has done a great job there," Franklin said.

Franklin and Lanning both spent time in the SEC, with Franklin coaching at Vanderbilt as head coach and Lanning at Georgia as defensive coordinator. Franklin said the experience in the SEC has allowed Lanning to "bring together" the two different worlds in his coaching approach.

"Dan's taking it to the next level, they've done a phenomenal job," Franklin said. "It's also a place with tremendous resources as well, and they've built that thing to compete at the highest level."

Franklin is considered by some to be a step below the upper echelon of college coaches, but Lan-

ning disagreed with that.

"(Franklin is) one of the elite coaches in the profession right now and runs his program the right way," Lanning said.

### Planning

December is a busy month with the playoffs, transfer portal and National Signing Day, so both coaches have a lot on their plates.

With National Signing day earlier than usual, scheduled for Wednesday, Franklin has different plans for how it's going to be handled due to the preparation for the Big Ten Championship.

"One of the biggest differences for signing day is that I'll be involved with signing day, with the recruiting staff, but none of the assistants will," Franklin said. "Typically, we've all been involved, but you know, with this being in season, that's going to be hard to pull off."

Lanning said his approach is taking everything "one day at a time."

"You wake up with your to-do list every single morning, and you try to make sure that you knock out every piece of that that matters," Lanning said. "But I think when you have great alignment with your organization, everybody understands where they're pulling and they're making sure that they're pulling in the right direction."

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### Joel Haas



Haas

**What to watch for:** Penn State's struggles in big games will continue on Saturday, as the Nittany Lions fall to Oregon in a shootout. It'll be a tight game from start to finish, but the Ducks' offensive firepower will be too much to handle. Oregon's defensive line will continue its hot streak and do enough to limit Drew Allar and the run game, keeping Penn State's offense one step behind.

Score: Oregon 31, Penn State 27

### Lyle Alenstein



Alenstein

**What to watch for:** Penn State's been playing its best ball recently, and I think it's time the Nittany Lions win a big game. Oregon struggled with Wisconsin two weeks ago when it played the Badgers, while Penn State dismantled the team from Madison with Beau Pribula as the quarterback. There's been a different level of confidence in the Lasch Building, and it's beginning to feel like the Nittany Lions are a team of destiny.

Score: Penn State 27, Oregon 24

### Avery Hill



Hill

**What to watch for:** Penn State is playing its best ball yet, and that continues Saturday, but it won't walk out victorious. Oregon is extremely talented and head coach Dan Lanning has taken the Ducks to an even higher level with his preparation and decision-making. The game will remain close until the very end, with both coaches getting uber-aggressive, but I think Oregon quarterback Dillon Gabriel leads the Ducks down the field for a game-winning drive.

Score: Oregon 31, Penn State 23

### Lexie Linderman



Linderman

**What to watch for:** Penn State's offensive line has its toughest task of the season ahead in the Big Ten Championship, and starting right tackle Anthony Donkoh's absence is going to prove to be a serious problem for the Nittany Lions. The blue and white's defense will do all it can, but the offense will struggle and Penn State won't have enough to defeat No. 1 Oregon.

Score: Oregon 21, Penn State 17

### Guest Picker: Sam Woloson

Managing Editor

**What to watch for:** This game will come down to Penn State's ability to get pressure on Oregon quarterback Dillon Gabriel and force errors. The Nittany Lion offense will need extra possessions and short fields to keep up. I don't think Penn State's offense can keep up with Oregon in a track meet, so takeaways, or a lack thereof, will be the difference.

Score: Oregon 30, Penn State 23





Photo by Kate Hildebrand

# CHASING A CHAMPIONSHIP

*No. 1 seed Penn State to host NCAA Regional in pursuit of 8th national title*

By Will Horstman  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

References to Penn State's history are woven into the historic Rec Hall.

A line of seven stars is featured in many places — such as on the players' uniforms — with each star representing one of the seven national championships the Nittany Lions have won over the years.

Coach Katie Schumacher-Cawley's squad has a favorable chance to add another star to the line after earning a No. 1 seed.

Six wins are all that stand between Penn State and its eighth star. As a No. 1 seed, the Nittany Lions will host the regional they're competing in, giving them coveted home-court advantage through the first four rounds.

Schumacher-Cawley's squad wants to go undefeated at home this season, and after a thrilling 3-1 victory over then-No. 2 Nebraska, it holds a 16-0 home

record heading into the tournament.

"This team, they have a goal of going undefeated at home," Schumacher-Cawley said. "It's definitely attainable for them and something that they know. Playing at Rec Hall is pretty special."

Penn State's quest for an eighth championship begins with Delaware State in the first round on Friday. The Hornets are the theoretical No. 16 seed in the regional, coming off of a 3-2 win over Howard to earn the MEAC Championship.

If the Nittany Lions make it to the second round on Saturday, they'll face the winner of No. 8 seed North Carolina and Yale. The Tar Heels are an at-large team, while the Bulldogs earned an automatic bid after winning the Ivy League Tournament.

All three of these teams could put up a fight and steal a set against the blue and white, but Penn State advancing past the first weekend feels likely given

its home-court advantage and its dominance over unranked teams throughout the season.

The regional semifinals will be the Nittany Lions' first chance to play a ranked opponent if they were to make it that far. Based on seeding, the most likely potential opponents are No. 4 seed Utah and No. 5 seed Marquette.

The Utes finished third in the Big 12 after a 24-5 campaign, cracking the top 20 in the final AVCA Poll at No. 17. The Golden Eagles fly into the tournament with a chance to rebound from their loss to Creighton in the Big East Championship.

While both of these teams present tougher tasks for Penn State, it's hard to imagine the Nittany Lions losing a match at home in this round, especially after consecutive wins in the first weekend of the tournament.

If the blue and white were to find itself in the regional final, its most likely opponent would be No. 2 seed Creighton. The Blue Jays were a candidate for the

fourth No. 1 seed in the tournament, but the Big East's easier strength of schedule presumably made the selection committee choose Louisville over them.

Creighton ran through the Big East this season, earning a perfect 18-0 conference record. In its nonconference schedule, two noteworthy results stick out: a four-set win over Purdue and a five-set loss to Nebraska.

The Blue Jays are the first significant threat to knocking Penn State out of its regional, and they could push the match to a fifth set as one of the top-ranked teams in the country. However, the Nittany Lions are a perfect 3-0 in Set 5 this season, and they'll still have home-court advantage in this match, so advancing past this round could be in store.

If the blue and white earns a spot in the national semifinals, its most likely opponent is No. 1 seed Nebraska before No. 1 seed Pittsburgh could await in the finals.

The semifinals and finals will be held in KFC Yum! Center in Louisville, Kentucky, meaning Penn State will lose its home-court advantage if it were to make this round.

The Nittany Lions have faced both Pittsburgh and Nebraska, losing 3-0 and winning 3-1, respectively. However, the home team won in each of those matches, and with these theoretical matches being held at the neutral site, it could be anyone's game to win and advance.

The task can be simply stated for Penn State to be among the final four teams: Win at home. After the regionals, the road to a title gets much tougher, but the Nittany Lions believe they have the talent necessary to add an eighth star to their uniforms.

"I think we, after (the Nebraska match), we can beat literally any team in the country," libero Gillian Grimes said.

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# Students, campus leaders discuss faith

Julia Kushner  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

University campuses around the world have become increasingly secular over time, but religion remains an important aspect of many students' lives. For those who practice, reconciling worldly campus life and religious pursuits can be a difficult feat at times.

Thanks to the myriad of organizations on campus prioritizing religious practice and leading religious lives, students can practice traditional observances, no matter their denomination.

Benji Himmel is the president of Chabad at Penn State, a Jewish organization aimed at "nurturing Jewish identity and upholding Jewish pride on college campuses worldwide," according to its website. Himmel said Chabad has "Rabbi leaders at many campuses... called Shlichim, which is like an emissary."

Himmel, a fourth-year studying Jewish studies and Middle Eastern studies, said Chabad wants to spread Judaism at these different campuses, as well as provide Jews with a place to go.

"It's the first time in most people's lives that they're choosing what Jewish things to do on their own," Himmel said.

Chabad hosts weekly events, including a class on the weekly Torah portion, a girls-only bagel brunch and a multi-course Shabbat dinner every Friday night.

Himmel said he's an observant Jew who eats kosher and is shomer Shabbos, meaning he fully follows all of the command-

ments of Shabbat, including the prohibition against doing any work.

In regards to the tensions between his own religiosity and the secular nature of campus, Himmel mentioned "the things that happen on Shabbat," which is observed from sunset on Friday to sunset Saturday.

"For example, football's a big one at the school. That's always a temptation," Himmel said.

Ebenezer Karikari, president of Adventist Campus Ministries, part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, leads a Christian group that he said "follows the Bible strictly."

"We go by what the Bible says. We don't go based on our opinions or other people's opinions," Karikari, a third-year studying premedicine, said.

Karikari said the organization's members, unlike other Christian groups, "keep a Saturday Sabbath," as well as "believe in an imminent coming of Christ."

Adventist Campus Ministries gathers for Bible studies, Saturday church attendance and worship together in the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center in the coming week, according to Karikari.

Because he's observant, non-religious situations can be challenging, Karikari said.

"If your friends are about to do something that's not very Christian, it can be difficult," Karikari said. "Things on Saturday you can't attend. That's also a problem."

Karikari said he hasn't missed church since coming to college over two years ago, and gave a recommendation for students

looking to be religiously engaged.

"Look for a club that's suitable to you. Don't look based on what seems pleasurable," Karikari said. "Look at what actually speaks to you and convicts you."

Ma'az Zaman is the president of the Muslim Students' Association, an organization aiming "to provide support and build community for Muslims on campus."

"Anybody who lives in a country that the majority of people don't follow the same religion that that person follows is going to have some sort of difficulty," Zaman said.

Zaman said, as a Muslim, he isn't able to drink or have any extramarital or premarital relationships, which can come into conflict with Penn State's party culture.

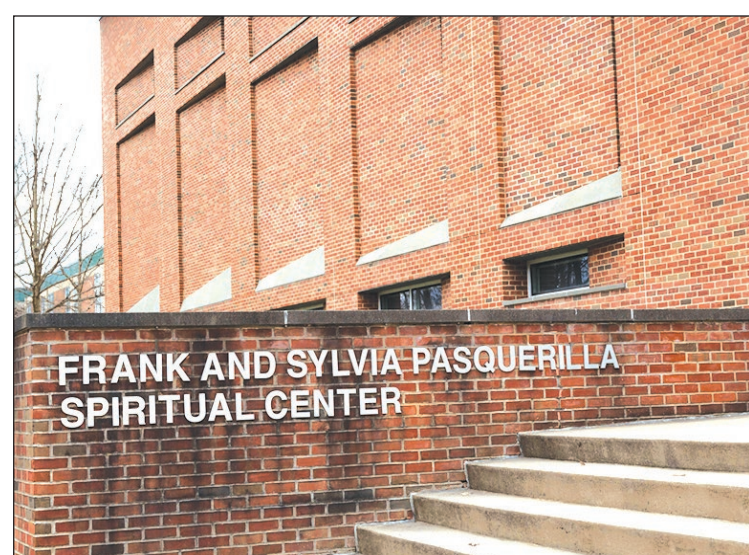
"One of the biggest challenges I've had as a Muslim is, in our religion, men and women who aren't related to one another aren't allowed to make physical contact," Zaman said. "So when we go to career fairs ... we don't shake anyone's hand."

However, Zaman said he believes "pressure makes diamonds."

"When we're struggling with these sorts of things, then as a result of it, we become all the more devout," Zaman said.

According to Zaman, MSA offers prayer services, provides scholars to connect with students so they can learn more about their faith and puts on social events.

Bob Smith, director of the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center, said he sees tensions between the ethics of students' religions and main-



Emily Rosio/Collegian file photo

The Frank and Sylvia Pasquerilla Spiritual Center on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 in University Park, Pa.

taining a typical college social life.

"I think that's just human nature," Smith said. "One thing that is very difficult ... is my religion tells me this, my ethics tell me that, but I'm in a particular situation."

On average, the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center sees over 4,500 students per week, with increased numbers during important holidays such as Ash Wednesday and Yom Kippur, according to Smith.

The building contains a room with an ark and a Torah, a kosher kitchen for Jews to cook, a wudu room for Muslims to wash their feet before prayer, rooms facing Mecca, meditation rooms, the attached Eisenhower Chapel and more. Though many rooms are designed for certain reli-

gions, every space is purposed to accommodate all.

"You'll have Muslim students and Jewish students and Catholic students and Hindu students all out here either hanging out, socializing, doing their work together," Smith said.

Smith said through learning about and interacting with those of different faiths, students have stepped up to the challenge of being not just respectful, but mindful of all.

Throughout his over 20-year career at Pasquerilla, Smith said he's seen the benefits and advantages of maintaining a religious life in college.

"Retention rates are higher. Sense of community is higher. GPAs are higher," Smith said.

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# STUDENT NEWS REWIND

Exploring the history of The Daily Collegian through archives

By **Sophie Ambrosina**  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Daily Collegian has served as an important news source for the students and community of Penn State for over a century, and it continues to evolve today.

In the words of the very first installment of The Free Lance, later becoming The Daily Collegian, “It shall be our aim to sedulously represent to our readers the status of our College, an institution which enjoys, against a sometimes faulted past, a prosperous present and the assurance of a most successful future.”

### Name changes

**1887-1904: The Free Lance**  
The first iteration of the newspaper was produced monthly, starting April 18, 1887. The Free Lance later changed from a newspaper into a literary magazine in 1895.

**1904-1911: The State Collegian**

The editors of The Free Lance founded a new weekly newspaper, the State Collegian, in 1904. The State Collegian promised to implement important changes.

The publication’s first edition read, “We claim that with proper care and loyal support, this publication can be made as interesting and newsy as (The Free Lance) was dry and stale.”

**1911-1940: Penn State Collegian**

The newspaper changed its name to the Penn State Collegian on Sept. 28, 1911 “in accordance with the usage which has developed rapidly within the past two years,” according to the publication’s editorial.

“‘Penn State’ is but little longer than ‘State,’ and is so much more definite and expressive that we advocate its use in all cases where the official title of the college is too long and dignified,” the editorial read.

**1940-Present: The Daily Collegian**

The publication began producing daily issues, hence its fourth and final name change.

In 1996, the Digital Collegian was launched. Using online publishing, the Collegian could deliver breaking news in real time.



Jackson Ranger/Collegian

**The Daily Collegian’s news and business divisions** pose on the “High School Musical” steps in the Willard Media Center during the 2023 fall semester.

### Location shifts

**1930:** The first location of the Daily Collegian on campus was referred to as “Journalism Alley” on the third floor of Old Main.

**1940:** The Collegian offices were moved into the basement of the Carnegie Building.

**1961:** The Collegian offices were moved to Room 20 of the Sackett Building.

**1979:** The Collegian offices were moved back to Carnegie in Room 126.

**1988:** The Collegian offices were moved to the James Building downtown.

**2018:** The Collegian was forced to move again due to the planned demolition of the James Building for a construction project.

The Collegian then moved to its current home in the Donald P. Bellisario Media Center, where it started renting office space in 2021. Often seen are staff members collaborating at the tables in the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Open Newsroom.

### Wartime

During World War I and II, the Collegian faced materials shortages, making issues difficult to publish consistently. During World War II, the Collegian was forced to transition to semi-week-

ly production from 1943-1946. Many of the women who worked on the newspaper during wartime held influential staff positions.

### Controversies

**1935:** When the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union called for the removal of beer in State College, the Collegian was firmly opposed.

This stance was the opposite of what The Free Lance believed, as it was in favor of prohibition in the past.

The Free Lance published an editorial in 1887 that said prohibition would “protect the boys and youth of our land from being victimized by the gay allurements of intemperance,” according to an April 1987 issue of the Collegian that described the situation.

**1970:** Reporter Rod Norland, who later went on to work with Newsweek, listened and reported on a closed meeting held by the Black Student Union.

When the organization found out about this, Black students at Penn State burned more than 10,000 copies of the paper. The Collegian suspended both Norland and editor Robert J. McHugh for the remainder of the semester.

**1979:** The Collegian unwittingly ran a series of racist advertisements. The paper issued an apology, but not on the front page. Black students were angered by editor Dave Skidmore’s refusal to run a front-page apology.

**2008**  
Reporter Michael Felletter was charged with failure to disperse and disorderly conduct when photographing a riot after Penn State football’s win over Ohio State.

The police alleged they asked Felletter to leave the scene, as he was making the crowd more excited. According to the Collegian story, one officer threatened him with profanity, pepper spray and took his driver’s license, all after he identified himself as a journalist. Charges were later dismissed that summer.

“The Collegian stands behind its staff members,” then-Editor-in-Chief Terry Casey said.  
**2010:** A State College lawyer attempted to get the criminal records of five of his clients removed from The Daily Collegian and the Centre Daily Times. The lawyer, Joe Amendola, was in the process of getting the defendants’ criminal records expunged.

He said having the records of his clients available through these newspapers undermined the purpose of expungement.

The newspapers pushed back, as this request went against the First Amendment. The judge rescinded the orders to delete archived information.

**2024:** Penn State removed newsstands and newspapers from campus with no prior warning, and nine of the 35 racks removed had voter registration information or political ads. The university claimed the removal was due to the advertisements violating commercial and political activity rules.

The newspaper relies on advertisements like these for revenue after a 100% cut in funding by the university in 2023. The removal of the papers raised concern about free speech produced by student journalism in the Penn State community.

### Awards & Achievements

**1940:** The Collegian Inc. was recognized as a nonprofit organization by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**1979:** The Collegian earned Associated Collegiate Press Five Marks of Distinction for the second consecutive year.

**1980:** The Collegian won the Business and Advertising Managers Ic. Trendsetter Award.

The paper also received awards for “in-house advertising promotion” and having the advertising manager of the year, Sales Manager Marc A. Brownstein.

**1982:** The Collegian was named the “top college newspaper in the country” by The Society of Professional Journalists.

**1985:** The Collegian received a national Pacemaker Award from the American Newspaper Publishers Association/Associated Collegiate Press.

**1986:** The Collegian was awarded the national Trendsetter Award by the College Media and Business Advertising Managers.

**2017:** The Collegian was ranked No. 4 by The Princeton Review in its ranking of American collegiate newspapers.

**2024:** The Collegian won four awards in the 2024 Student Keystone Media Awards.

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Chris Eutsler/Collegian

**The Sweet Tooth Bakery, known for its cookies and chocolates,** shares a building with the Agape Coffee House on Miller Alley on Dec. 3, 2024 in State College, Pa.

## Sweet treat alert

Sweet Tooth Bakery brings memories, innovation to Penn State

By **Jocelyn Bilker**  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Sweet Tooth Bakery has been serving delectable cakes, cookies and treats since 1993. Founded and operated by Cheri Christian, the bakery has evolved to offer various services and special products, making it a unique destination for both sweet tooths and event planners alike.

Christian’s journey into the bakery business started with a simple yet heartfelt goal — to make a positive impact in others’ lives while watching her kids grow up.

“I could bring my kids here,” Christian said. “I put them on my working table, and they grew up here playing in the bakery. My family helped me with the most memorable cakes. There were two; one in the shape of a tooth and the other a Christmas tree.”

Christian reminisced about the days when her daughter learned to walk in the bakery, pushing plastic buckets around.

“I love being part of people’s lives, like when they have their babies and celebrate each milestone,” Christian said.

One of the bakery’s signature offerings is personalized cookies with pictures. Beyond these sweet treats, Christian’s passion for baking is deeply rooted in her heritage.

Growing up in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, Christian developed a love for cake decorating after watching a friend create wedding cakes. Her Hungarian heritage also influenced her baking, especially traditional pastries for the holidays.

Christian continued to expand her skills, attending classes at the Wilton Sweet Studio in Chicago and mastering techniques including fondant and chocolate cake artistry.

“I keep taking classes and get online inspiration for whatever is trending,” Christian said. “I’m going to make burn-away cakes for Valentine’s Day.”

Devin Christian, Cheri’s son who started a balloon business at just 14 years old, now runs Nitany Balloons, a division of Sweet Tooth Bakery that offers balloon decor, sculptures and twisting for events.

“It’s brought in more corporate clients and allowed us to work with a larger clientele while I focus on smaller events,” Devin Christian said.

Sweet Tooth Bakery offers various made-to-order products like chocolate-covered Oreos, brownies and giant cookies. Other pastries and cookies change weekly, catering to a range of tastes for everyday treats and special occasions.

One of the bakery’s unique

offerings is its “funeral cookies,” a tradition for memorial services reflecting the emotional significance of such events.

“I made (funeral cookies) for my pastor’s service when they passed away,” Cheri Christian said.

Brian Christian, Cheri’s husband, also plays an important role in the business. He helps manage the bakery and fix equipment, all while baking seasonal favorites like cheesecakes and cookies during busy holidays and maintaining core relationships with his family.

“I taste new cheesecake and cookie recipes every year,” Brian Christian said. “My favorite memory is when we had our kids, and they would decorate gingerbread houses.”

Brian Christian’s involvement with the bakery dates back to the mid-1990s, when Cheri needed extra help.

Since then, he has become an integral part of the team, working part-time and ensuring everything runs smoothly during peak seasons.

“It’s nice to see people enjoy our sweets,” Brian Christian said.

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## Managing stress

Flourish Fair helps students destress

By **Paloma Munoz**  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Penn State Student Affairs held a Flourish Fair event in the HUB-Robeson Center’s Heritage Hall on Tuesday to help students destress during final exam season. This is the fair’s third year in operation after starting in fall 2022.

“We just wanted (students) to know that (they) are cared for and supported by a lot of different people and departments here at Penn State,” Erin Raupers, event organizer, said. “We’re really offering contemplative type practices around managing stress through mindfulness techniques, not just for managing stress for one test, but actually in the long term.”

The event hall had positive statements like “exams do not define you” hung up on boards, and the organizations present each had a table with a checklist listing their purpose for attending.

Soothing music played in the hall and tables circled the center, allowing attendees to sit and complete one of the many activities from the craft corner.

Marta Plumhoff helped at the Student Farm table where students could make mini greenhouses and grow microgreens.

“It’s really great to see students crafting and working on stuff and taking this as some time to just destress,” Plumhoff said. “Digging your hands in the dirt (and) growing things can be really great for your mental health.”

The Flourish Fair started after many of the professional staff members in health and wellness noticed that students were stressed before finals week, according to Raupers. The fair evolved to include other organizations outside of Student Affairs, with the latest additions being the Student Farm and Penn State Sustainability.

“It’s not just recycling. That’s a part, but it’s a really wide array of events and it’s nice to kind of highlight that,” Grant Rowe, manager of the Penn State Sustainability table, said. “It’s

nice to be here and kind of highlight that intersection between mindfulness and sustainability.”

Raupers said how flourishing has multiple dimensions — including intellectual development, psychological health and physical health.

“This isn’t just a health promotion and wellness event, it is a collaborative effort,” Raupers said. “We don’t have every single dimension, but we’re working toward that, so we hope to build in the future.”



Jonah Richmond/Collegian

**Alexis Patkochis, a fourth-year student studying biobehavioral health,** holds a bookmark made at the Flourish Fair on Dec. 3, 2024.

Both Rowe and Plumhoff emphasized the event’s positive offerings to students and learning environment informing of different methods of destressing and resources they might’ve not known they had on campus otherwise.

“It is their (Penn State’s) job to create spaces for students to feel well and good,” Plumhoff said. “I think it’s a really great thing to offer to students.”

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# Review: How does Yallah stack up?

**By Sienna Pinney**  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Wake up, it's breakfast time. Located at 310 E. College Ave. across from the Blue Loop bus stop, most of us are familiar with the colorful exterior of Yallah Taco and the banner announcing "breakfast."

While Yallah didn't reach the top of my State College Mexican restaurant rankings, it's a solid option for hungry students on a budget.

Here's how I feel about Yallah's breakfast, beverages and beyond.

**Breakfast**

I'm here to tell you Yallah breakfast is better than the rest of the menu. However, the breakfast menu was elusive on the online menu, so I'd recommend ordering inside the establishment.

I tried the breakfast tacos and quesadilla and found them to be far superior to the regular tacos and quesadillas. I'm not sure why that is; I'm simply here to report what I've tasted.

Each item can be customized

to include your choice of protein or to be vegetarian. The bacon could've been crispier, but we all have room to improve in life. The chorizo had tons of flavor.

The breakfast burrito is a good deal, coming in at \$10 unless you add extra fillings. However, my complaint with Yallah is I often find that my food isn't hot enough, leaving me with unmelted cheese.

If you're someone who enjoys your breakfast tacos at noon like me, you're in luck because Yallah serves breakfast well into the day.

**Breakfast tacos with bacon:** 7/10  
**Breakfast quesadilla with chorizo:** 8/10  
**Breakfast burrito with ham:** 7.5/10

**Lunch and dinner**

The price of Yallah is its main appeal for me, while the actual quality of the food doesn't reach the top of my list.

While there are several protein options, I often feel like they're lacking in the flavor department.

On several occasions, I've also found that my quesadillas weren't hot enough to actually melt all of

the cheese, which can make even the most delicious fillings fall short.

However, the cost-to-portion ratio can't be beat.

**Pulled beef quesadilla:** 6/10  
**Chicken rice bowl:** 5/10  
**Steak tacos:** 7/10

**Beverages**

What's the purpose of eating if you don't have a good beverage to sip?

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: Yallah crushes the beverage game. If I weren't poor, I'd probably stop at Yallah several times a week to get my sipping in.

I love cinnamon. Probably too much. If you're not familiar, horchata is a cinnamon rice milk drink, and it's delectable.

The Yallah horchata tastes like it was made by someone who loves cinnamon just as much as I do, which is a match made in heaven for me. However, if you're not a die-hard cinnamon fan, you might want to opt for a fruitier beverage.

Some of my favorites are the lemonade and lemonade variations, as well as smoothies. I like



Jake Brook/Collegian

**Yallah Taco** sits on College Avenue, encompassing a plethora of Mexican options like horchatas and breakfast tacos.

the strawberry and mango lemonades the most, but the original is also solid.

The refreshers are also delicious and very sweet, but I prefer the lemonade options slightly more.

The Mexico Lindo is a no-sugar-added smoothie that starts on a tart note and finishes off sweet.

I liked that it wasn't super thick and had a unique flavor.

**Horchata:** 11/10  
**Mexico Lindo:** 8.5/10  
**Mango Lemonade:** 8.5/10  
**Strawberry Lemonade:** 9/10  
**Strawberry Refresher:** 8/10

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# Bringing online attention to Happy Valley

**By Alli Satterfield**  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Growing up in Bradford, Pennsylvania, all 13-year-old Hannah Morris wanted for Christmas was a Penn State sweatshirt. She got one, and it was something she "never wanted to take off."

Although she didn't get to fulfill her dream of studying musical theater at Penn State, Morris now lives out her State College fantasy with her husband and two kids, sharing clips of her life and tidbits of State College culture on Instagram with her handle @happyvalleyhannah.

Morris' journey started six years ago with her daughter's newborn photoshoot. She hired photographer Sara Blose to take pictures of her daughter, and the "instant chemistry" Blose felt with Morris led to friendship, and more recently, a business partnership.

Blose told Morris that State College needed "a hyper-local

influencer," and the sentiment was a "light bulb moment" for her. Morris said she claimed her Instagram username 10 minutes later.

That was about a year ago. "My life is so different now than it might've been," Morris said.

Instead of staying home every day with her son and daughter, Morris now ventures into the community to create content, highlight special events and "spread cheer" online. All of this is tailored to her audience of Penn State students, State College visitors and residents, who she refers to as "Happy Valley-ians."

"Hannah has a really great handle on who her audience is and how to communicate well with that audience," Elizabeth Fegert, Morris' public relations specialist and founder of GJ Design Company, said. "She's incredibly authentic."

Morris is aware of State College's university pride and sheds light on Penn State by posting

about Lion Surplus, the White Out game and buildings on campus. She's also aware of her community's emotional bond and desire to share its hometown image.

Recently trademarking the phrase "The Happiest Valley," Happy Valley Hannah will release a line of clothing merchandise just in time for the holiday season.

"It's really exciting, and it's nerve-racking," Morris said. "It's this whole other thing I'm figuring out and navigating."

Her online presence is something that brings her community together, but it's also something that strengthens Morris' bond with her family. Although there's sometimes fruit snack bribery involved, Morris' kids are an essential part of her brand as a mom, and for the most part, love helping her create content.

"They think it's really fun," Morris said. "They're like, 'Hey, mom, will you put this on Instagram?'"



Jonah Richmond/Collegian

**Hannah Morris** known online as Happy Valley Hannah stands for a portrait in the courtyard of The Allenway.

In addition to bringing the State College community and her family together, Morris' brand helps bring people to the area by advertising small businesses.

"When I'm thinking about going to a destination, the first thing I do is look (it) up on Instagram and browse through small businesses there and what different people are posting," Ellen Matis, owner of Hello Social Co., said.

Travel is where content creators like Morris can become influencers. By shedding light on shopping and other activities in downtown State College, Morris can bring other people into her community.

She loves this welcoming aspect of State College and attributes a lot of her success to it.

"This wouldn't be possible in other places," Morris said. "I don't think I would've been able to create an account like this in my hometown. Here, people want to see you succeed, and there's this community pride that we're happy to share."

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MY VIEW | MERCEDES HAMILTON

# Making the most of study abroad

They say the world is your classroom, so why stop in Dublin? With the help of RyanAir,



**Hamilton** spend a day or two in several countries during my four months abroad.

While I love Dublin's charming streets and the bustling Trinity College campus, breaks from my daily routine to experience new sights and sounds has been a great way to recharge and make the time go by faster amid difficulty being away from home and my loved ones for so long.

From trying schnitzel and käsekrainer in Vienna to dancing in the street with strangers in Athens, traveling has brought me unforgettable experiences and taken me out of my comfort zone in ways I never imagined.

Beyond simply ticking destinations off your list, experiencing different cultures and ways of life offers valuable perspectives on the world and your place in it. Though it may not be easy, I highly recommend venturing beyond your host country while you study abroad.

My first piece of advice is to prepare well in advance; it's never too early to start saving. Your future self will thank you

for skipping your daily iced latte and working the late night and weekend shifts.

Also, apply for as many grants and scholarships as you can, and do it as soon as possible. Many academic colleges and other organizations have grants to help mitigate the costs associated with living on your own for four months, including housing, food and transportation.

Enrichment funding from the College of the Liberal Arts and a grant from the Schreyer Honors College really allowed me to make the most out of my summer job savings. The Fulbright Scholar Program and scholarships offered by your program (mine was IES Abroad) are more ways to not only mitigate the cost, but save enough to make the most out of your experience.

To make the most out of your savings, do some in-depth research and planning. Google Sheets is your best friend.

I recommend looking into a program where housing is included, so you only have to focus on food, transportation and fun. Get a general estimate of these expenses and create a weekly budget — your remaining savings are for travel. Keep track while you're abroad.

If you're studying in Europe, Ryanair is also your best friend. It's me and my free under-the-seat carry-on backpack against the world.



Courtesy of Mercedes Hamilton

**Hamilton** stands in front of Big Ben while exploring London. Hamilton is studying abroad in Dublin this semester.

Skyscanner has a feature that will show you the cheapest flight on any given day to literally anywhere. Book weeks ahead!

That leads to my next point: be willing to go anywhere. Some of my favorite journeys were the ones I previously hadn't considered. Luxembourg and Lisbon were some of the most beautiful cities I've ever seen.

And if there's somewhere you really want to go that is out of your budget, see how you can get there cheaper from somewhere else. For example, it was too expensive for me to fly to

Athens from Dublin. So, I flew to Vienna to Athens to Rome and then back to Dublin during my fall break, and all of that was cheaper than the roundtrip ticket.

Flights will also be cheaper if you fly out on Saturday morning instead of Friday, and fly back in on Sunday night or early Monday morning. Don't avoid taking Friday and Monday classes to travel. Trust me, one or two days is enough.

Another tip: hostels aren't that bad, I swear. If it's clean and safe, it's doable. Studying

abroad is an uncomfortable experience in itself. If you're going to be uncomfortable, be uncomfortable in Scotland.

It's worth making an itinerary before you get there to avoid spontaneous excursions and meals. Spontaneity only works when it's free — or cheap at the very least. Treat TikTok like Google, and let locals and other budget travelers tell you what to see and where to eat.

Go to the museums with the student deals and see most of the landmarks from the outside — give or take the ones that are truly special to you. For example, I got tickets for the Acropolis in Athens but not for the Colosseum in Rome.

It's also worth bringing your laptop and other class materials on your trips. I've read entire books for class and finished papers in airports, on planes and before bed in hostels. There's no time to be wasted.

Careful planning and a flexible mindset is key. Whether it's exploring iconic landmarks, indulging local cuisine or meeting new people, every trip offers a chance to learn and create life-long memories.

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MY VIEW | JADZIA SANTIAGO

# Prioritize peaceful moments

If you've been keeping up with my columns up to this point, you know one thing is true: I've never known peace.

Never, not once in my life. Whether it's personal or professional, positive or negative, my friends say "there's always something."

I was just born to have interesting lore, I guess. Recently, though, life slowed down a bit for me. Before Thanksgiving break, I found myself unburdened by anything except faraway deadlines for final projects.

I finally had two things I'd been looking forward to: time to read, and plans to go to my partner's house for Thanksgiving. However, I also had a secret third thing: a cold, which didn't hit me until I got home.

Like I said, there's always something. However, I was determined. I recovered enough to travel (and not infect absolutely everyone at the Thanksgiving table), and finally took those days off I'd been planning.

The difference in me between the day I left for break and the day I came back to

campus was staggering.

Don't get me wrong, I'm still tired and stressed — the whole nine yards. But I actually feel ready to take on these last two weeks, come what may.

Maybe it was my first Thanksgiving dinner with people who didn't want to throttle each other, the hospitality of my partner's mother or the lovable mischief of their dog. It could've also been the time my partner and I spent rewatching "Gravity Falls," our mutually beloved childhood show, or laughing about something or other.

Regardless of what it was, there was a moment where I was reading on the couch while the snow flurried outside and my partner stirred awake in the other room. In the quiet of that central Pennsylvania morning, I felt myself come alive again.

I know for certain that I'm not the only college student who's constantly running from — and into — chaos. Maybe you're like me, and you've lived like this for your whole life, or

maybe your stint with mayhem was or will be short-lived.

No matter what, it can be easy to get caught up in the whirlwind. The chaos becomes you, in a way, consuming all that you are.

There are times so busy that it's possible to forget who you are, what drives you, whether you like what you're doing, and if not, what you even like to do.

It's not hard to start seeing life as all deadlines, drama, mishaps and endless to-do lists.

But moments like that one on the couch, the ones that exist off the clock or the calendar, are the ones that shape your identity. They're where poetry, art, music and stories come from.

Most importantly, they're reminders that it doesn't have to be like this.

Needless to say, I put a ton of pressure on myself, for a list of reasons so long it'd definitely break the maximum word count I'm allowed for this column.

I often catch myself thinking

"In these next two weeks, take some time to prioritize peace. Gently move some things out of the way, or fight for it if you must."

Jadzia Santiago

that moments of peace aren't important. I know a lot of people who do the same.

Reading for leisure on the couch definitely wasn't crossing anything off a list or checking a box. But what it did was much more important: it helped me remember why I was there in the first place.

Truly, that's all a girl balancing three jobs can ask for.

Since then, I've come to think of the true self and all that comes with it as a skittish animal. It gets scared with all the noise, but given some quiet, it will come back to you.

We're at that point in the fall semester where hell is on the horizon, if not already here. Now is the time to strap in for approximately the worst two weeks ever.

In these next two weeks, take some time to prioritize peace. Gently move some things out of the way, or fight for it if you must.

Trust me, a peaceful moment will help you remember what you're doing it all for.

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and solicit advertising for them.

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One last ride

5th-year veterans radiate confidence throughout Penn State wrestling

By Andrew Deal  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

A historic 2023-24 season from Penn State was backed by three wrestlers in what could've been the final season of their collegiate careers.

However, Beau Bartlett, Carter Starocci and Greg Kerkvliet all returned for an extra year in search of another national championship.

Starocci and Kerkvliet are coming off individual national title runs, with Bartlett finishing as the runner-up in the 2024 NCAA Championships.

Beau Bartlett

Bartlett hasn't found that national title for himself yet, but confidence still flows through him as he searches for his first title.

"I really just love to compete," Bartlett said. "I love this, and I'm going to wrestle the best I've ever wrestled, and we're going to see what happens."

The Tempe, Arizona, native said he figured out the mental aspect of wrestling last offseason, which might just be more important than the physical side of the sport.

"I've figured out the flow state, so we're going to see a really good Beau Bartlett," Bartlett said.

The 141-pound wrestler had a very strong 2023-24 campaign, finishing 24-2, with his only losses coming to Ohio State's Jesse Mendez. After finishing No. 2 in his weight class last year and No. 3 the season prior, most wrestlers would be satisfied.

Not Bartlett though, who believes his best has yet to come.

"I don't think I've hit that breakthrough yet," Bartlett said.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

**Penn State's Carter Starocci** wins the match against Northern Iowa's Parker Keckeisen at the NWCA All-Star Classic Exhibition on Nov. 16, 2024.

"I know how I'm feeling, and no one has gotten to see that yet."

Throughout his time at Penn State, the fifth-year senior doesn't feel like he's appreciated his time as a Nittany Lion. After four years in Happy Valley, his mindset has shifted.

"I'm really grateful to be here, and I feel like the fire inside is just burning brighter than ever," Bartlett said.

Carter Starocci

Starocci will go down as one of the greatest collegiate wrestlers of all time because of his accolades through four seasons.

The process of Starocci's fourth championship is something that'll continue to be documented throughout his wrestling career.

The graduate senior won a

national title essentially on one leg, showcasing his grit and resolve as a wrestler.

"I always say that I don't need to be 100% healthy all the time to win," Starocci said.

Similar to Bartlett, Starocci's confidence is evident, fueling his performance on the mat.

That confidence isn't a coincidence, though. It comes from the amount of time and work he puts in day in and day out to become the best wrestler he can possibly be.

"I've got wrestling, so if you're doing any less than me, I'm going to dominate you," Starocci said. "There's no way you're doing more than me because that's impossible, and if you are, your body is overtrained and I'm still going to dominate you."

Not only does he have

confidence in himself, but the coaching staff has all of the confidence in him, as well.

The Erie, Pennsylvania, native is going for a fifth title, which would make history. His coach, Cael Sanderson, understands what it takes to win consistently at the highest level, as he's one of the few wrestlers to win four straight titles in his collegiate career.

"I think (Carter) is just a competitor and he's confident," Sanderson said. "He's not going out there to sneak wins."

In his first matchup of the regular season, Starocci didn't just sneak out a win. He did exactly what he said he was going to do and dominated on his way to a 19-3 technical-fall victory against Drexel.

Starocci will continue his

season with his eyes set on a fifth championship.

**Greg Kerkvliet**

Kerkvliet slowly made the rise as a starter during his first four years at Penn State.

A four-time All-American, he placed seventh in his freshman year at the NCAA's and rose to fourth his sophomore year, before reaching the national title match his junior season.

While Kerkvliet fell short in that title match, he bounced back with a perfect senior season en route to winning his first NCAA title in 2024.

Despite a stellar season, Kerkvliet still looked for areas to improve to make it back-to-back championship campaigns.

"Some areas of focus for me this offseason was just mental," Kerkvliet said. "Figuring it out mentally, I think that's 90%. I think most of combat sports is mental."

The Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, native posted a perfect 20-0 record last season while dominating the national title match 13-4 to secure his first collegiate national championship.

As Penn State begins the 2024-25 season, it would seem very difficult to improve on last year's historic squad. However, the confidence from the three veteran stars has placed confidence into the entire team.

"We lost some great guys from last year, but I think this team can be even better than last year's team," Starocci said.

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157 to 174

Levi Haines' journey through different weight classes

By AJ Piazza  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When you're the national champion at your weight class, you don't expect to move up two weight classes the following season.

That was the case for Levi Haines, who moved from 157 pounds to 174 pounds as he tries to become a back-to-back national champion at two different weight classes.

Haines, a three-year captain at Biglerville High School, went 40-1 his freshman year and was a runner-up in the state tournament. As a sophomore, Haines went 30-4 and repeated his runner-up result at states.

Haines went 30-0 and won the state championship during his junior season — his final year of high school wrestling.

Haines didn't compete his senior season. Instead, he wrestled in the collegiate level opens, winning the Edinboro Open and Franklin & Marshall Open.

The Arendtsville, Pennsylvania, native then committed to Penn State as a highly touted prospect who was ranked No. 12 in the 2022 recruiting class.

Wrestling at 157 his freshman season, Haines tallied a 25-2 record that included five majors, one tech fall and three pins.

"When Levi was going to go (174), I was like, 'Wow, that's gonna be a move for him,'" coach Cael Sanderson said. "He's just

disciplined enough and does everything right that he made it work."

Haines started strong, earning Big Ten Freshman of the Year honors while finishing the season as a Big Ten Champion after defeating No. 1 Peyton Robb of Nebraska.

In the NCAA Tournament, Haines entered as the No. 2 seed and finished as the runner-up after being defeated in the national championship by North Carolina's Austin O'Connor. He was named a freshman All-American after his performance in the tournament — a fitting award after a standout rookie season.

Haines was even more dominant at 157 his sophomore season, posting an undefeated 23-0 record. In those matches, he tallied five pins, five tech falls, and five majors.

Haines became a back-to-back Big Ten champion after he defeated No. 16 Will Lewan of Michigan in the Big Ten Championships. He also secured his first national championship after he defeated No. 2 Jacori Teemer of Arizona State.

For the 2024-25 season, Haines made the jump from 157 to 174, almost a 20-pound weight difference. It's normal to get bumped up one weight class, but to get bumped up two weight classes is rare.

"When Levi was going to go (174), I was like, 'Wow, that's gonna be a move for him,'" coach

Cael Sanderson said. "He's just disciplined enough and does everything right that he made it work."

The junior has started off this season undefeated. Haines ended his match early against Drexel with a tech fall in the second period. At the Army Black Knight Invitational, he shared the 174-pound championship with teammate Matt Lee.

"I feel pretty good, enjoy the process of making the weight and feel good, excited for something different," Haines said.

Now that he's moved up to 174, there are times where he might wrestle someone a full weight class ahead of him, such as four-time national champion Carter Starocci.

"I think training is fun, but obviously I think competing is the most fun," Starocci said. "So I'd rather do this any day than wrestle Levi or any of those guys at practice."

Haines will look to follow in Starocci's footsteps and become a national champion at 174 pounds.

They call Penn State's second half of the lineup "murderer's row." It's the strongest part of the squad's roster, which Haines is now a part of.

"I just appreciate the opportunity to be a part of such a special team," Haines said.

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Lily LaRegina/Collegian file photo

**Fans** fill the Bryce Jordan Center before Penn State wrestling's dual meet against Ohio State on Feb. 4, 2022

Fear the freshman

By Evan Smith  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Sometimes, you just have to wait and see. That's the case with Penn State's 125-pound freshman, Luke Lilledahl.

Lilledahl entered the first competition weekend expecting to see his first action against Drexel. His family and friends made the trip to Happy Valley to see his Rec Hall debut.

Then Lilledahl's phone rang on Saturday. It was coach Cael Sanderson calling to tell him that both of his potential opponents had gotten injured. Lilledahl's moment to get a feel for the mat in Rec Hall has yet to come.

"I was a little bit upset that we didn't get to see him have a match," 149-pound wrestler Shayne Van Ness said after the matchup with Drexel. "It'll be fun seeing him compete in our singlet for the first time, I'm excited for that."

"Lightning Luke" was highly touted coming to Penn State, being the No. 1 ranked prospect in the 2024 class.

He continued to impress, including putting on a show in the U.S. Olympic Trials at the Bryce Jordan Center last spring. The high schooler made it all the way to the quarterfinals as one of the youngest names at the event.

Any question of whether that success would carry over into college was put to rest at the Black Knight Invitational, where Lilledahl's first tournament in a blue and white singlet resulted in a championship at 125.

"I think I wrestled really well," Lilledahl said. "Even in the matches that were close, I controlled the action."

The St. Charles, Missouri, native recorded two tech falls in three matches throughout the event. The only wrestler he didn't score bonus points against was his teammate, Kurt

McHenry.

When asked about the key to his transition from high school to college wrestling, Lilledahl emphasized the importance of staying on top during matches.

"With the riding time and near-fall points, it's important," Lilledahl said. "If you get one near fall it opens the match up a lot more."

During practice, Lilledahl strives to learn from every resource around him, wrestling with names from Van Ness to Gary Steen up to Sanderson himself.

"(Lilledahl) learns, he gets better, he competes hard," Sanderson said. "He loves wrestling, and he loves learning."

Rather than just the technical skills that "Lightning Luke" is already an expert of, he prefers to learn more about the psychological aspect of wrestling from his teammates and learning how his star teammates use their heads on the mat.

"I enjoy learning how other people think and seeing if it can work for me. If it doesn't, then I move onto something else," Lilledahl said.

He also puts a focus on keeping his emotions in check during rough points in competition, a skill that didn't need to be showcased in his first matches.

Lilledahl has also been touted for the emotions he brings to the wrestling room at Rec Hall, always bringing an upbeat vibe to practice.

"Luke's just been awesome for the program," Sanderson said. "He brings in a very positive energy all the time, and it doesn't take a lot to make him smile."

The Nittany Lions expect Lilledahl to quickly become a fan favorite in Happy Valley. Van Ness said, "I'd be shocked if he wasn't already."

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Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

**Penn State's Levi Haines** wins the match against San Diego State's Cade DeVos during the NWCA All-Star Classic Exhibition on Nov. 16, 2024.



# ‘Couldn’t have performed better’

From club hockey to varsity starter: John Seifarth’s journey through Hockey Valley

By Adam Waxman  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The roar of the Pegula Ice Arena crowd was deafening, but John Seifarth barely noticed. All he could hear was the pounding of his heart as he skated to his crease, wearing the title of starting goaltender for Penn State hockey — a role he couldn’t have imagined a few weeks earlier.

The Pittsburgh native made 10 appearances in 2023-24 with Penn State’s club hockey team, the ACHA’s Ice Lions— posting a 4-6 record with a .912 save percentage and a 3.24 goals-against average. Now playing at the Division I level, Seifarth says the differences are apparent.

“Practices for the club team were definitely different,” Seifarth said. “They were twice a week for an hour and a half each, starting at around 9:30 p.m. They were inherently a bit different from the D1 practices, and making the switch was a huge difference for me.”

Managing his schedule during those days wasn’t easy. Between late-night practices and classes, Seifarth had little time for anything else. When he was signed as a walk-on to Penn State’s Division I team this season, his workload — and expectations — grew exponentially.

“(John) was actually recommended by a couple of our alumni because he was here skating,” coach Guy Gadowsky said. “Guys saw how much he loved the game and that he would stay out and want to take shots. (Defender) Christian Berger specifically came and said, ‘Man, he’s a great guy. Loves the game, loves playing goal, will stay and do anything for the guys.’ After a while, getting to know more, Christian was like, ‘Look, I really think he would be awesome.’”

Berger’s recommendation carried weight. His endorsement underscored Seifarth’s work ethic and character, ultimately earning him a chance to join the Division I squad — a jump Seifarth has taken in stride.

“Club practices were pretty manageable, but to make that jump, I was at full exertion all the time during D1 practices,” Seifarth said. “I’m on the ice



Megan Miller/Collegian

**Goaltender John Seifarth** focuses while doing drills during warmups before the Penn State men’s hockey game against St. Lawrence on Oct. 26, 2024.

around eight hours a week now, not to mention the time we spend in the gym.”

While hockey demanded more of him, academics did, too. Initially a pre-engineering major, Seifarth struggled to balance school and sports. But he adjusted, switching to a statistics major and focusing on excelling both on and off the ice.

“I really kicked it academically into high gear because I knew that was the expectation Coach Gadowsky has for his players,” Seifarth said.

Seifarth credited former club goalie Matt Erlichman for helping him grow into the role. Erlichman, who once walked on as a third goalie for Penn State’s D1 team, mentored Seifarth through the transition.

“Matt played a huge role in my success as a club player and in my transition to this role,” Seifarth said. “He offered me extra ice time and guidance on and off the ice.”

After starting netminder Arsenii Sergeev was sidelined with an injury, Seifarth was called upon to serve as a backup to Noah Gran- nan as No. 5 Michigan came to Hockey Valley.

“The position of a third goalie is extremely important,” Gadowsky said. “I think they have one of the most important jobs when it comes to team culture. Those are

the guys that just do a great job for us.”

Seifarth’s leap from club hockey to the NCAA spotlight was never more evident than during the late-November series against Michigan. Entering the third period of Game 2, with Grannan having already given up 13 total goals in the series, Seifarth got the nod to take the crease.

“I obviously had in my mind that if something happened, I was up, but going in for that third period completely caught me off guard,” Seifarth said. “Going from being a club athlete to playing against some of the best college hockey players in the country was an intimidating feeling.”

The Michigan offense wasted no time testing him, launching a barrage of shots. Though Penn State ultimately fell to the Wolverines, Seifarth made key saves and earned the trust of his teammates and coaches.

“Trusting myself and the training I had been doing in the previous months was huge,” Seifarth said. “It was a super special moment to be out there with the guys, but obviously, it wasn’t the outcome we wanted.”

That trust extended into the following week when Seifarth was named the starter for a two-game home series against Colgate. The announcement caught him off guard but also marked a significant milestone in his journey.

“Hearing that I was starting against Colgate before practice Monday was insane,” Seifarth said. “My teammates were

so supportive all Monday and pumped me up the whole day.”

Seifarth’s nerves were evident, but he leaned on his routines and the support of his teammates to stay focused.

“I kept telling myself it was like any other Tuesday this year,” Seifarth said. “Show up at the rink, do your job the best you can, go home knowing you filled your role that day and helped this team out.”

By game time, Seifarth had settled into a rhythm. Anchored by a strong defensive effort from his

teammates, he delivered a poised performance that secured a critical victory for Penn State.

“The boys played super well in front of me and took care of me big time during that game,” Seifarth said. “They really gave me a chance to succeed, and I was super grateful that they trusted me with the net again.”

Seifarth was named Big Ten First Star of the Week after his performance in the series sweep over Colgate. In his first two collegiate starts, Seifarth stopped 47 of 50 shots, including a career best 25 saves in a 3-2 victory, and added 22 saves in a 7-1 win the following night.

His .940 save percentage and 1.50 goals-against average earned him the honor.

Seifarth’s recognition as the First Star of the Week made him the first Nittany Lion to earn the distinction since Kevin Wall on Jan. 4, 2023.

As Seifarth continues to settle into his role, his journey is far from over. However, one thing is clear: He’s ready to rise to whatever challenge comes next.

“(Seifarth’s) future depends a lot on what happens with Arsenii,” Gadowsky said. “He was called in to do a job that wasn’t really in the description when we talked about him joining the team as a third goalie, and he could not have performed better.”

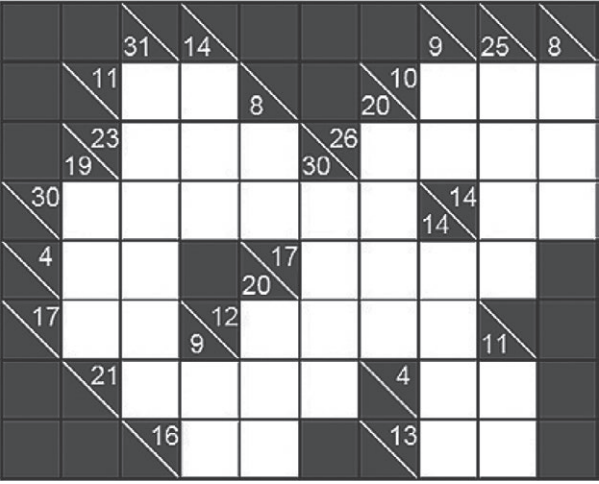
To email reporter: [acw5735@psu.edu](mailto:acw5735@psu.edu).  
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Noah Aberegg/Collegian

**Goalie John Seifarth** guards the goal at the Penn State men’s hockey game against Cornell at Pegula Ice Arena on Nov. 26, 2024.

## Kakuro



The rules are easy:  
A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it.  
A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it.  
You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit can only be used once in any sequence.

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## Sudoku

5	6	4	3				1
			6				
	1	8			6		7
					7		4
4	1					9	2
2	8						
9	5			1	4		
			2				
7			4	5	2		9

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S H M B A Q O L N U Y Y H S R N D R  
E E E R T Y L I M A F E S T J T A E  
A O R A D X G V R B R T S B P G H L  
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Chart  
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History  
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Mother  
Origin  
Parents  
Past  
Records  
Relatives  
Research  
Siblings  
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Source

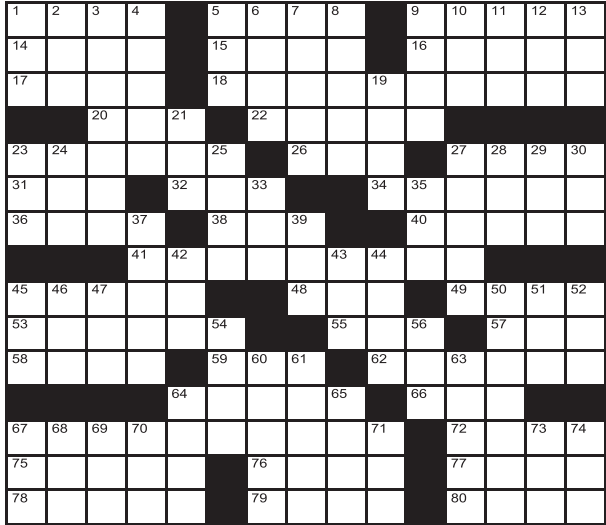
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## Crossword



### Across

1 Forest growth  
5 Farrier’s tool  
9 Acquired relative  
14 Funnyman Sandler  
15 “Dies \_\_\_\_\_” (hymn)  
16 It may be fit for a queen  
17 Sheet of stamps  
18 Shortly  
20 Candy holder  
22 Man of La Mancha  
23 Seizes  
26 Swedish shag rug  
27 Multigenerational story  
31 Relative of reggae  
32 “The Simpsons” bartender  
34 Calendar of a court  
36 Peccadilloes  
38 “Indubitably”  
40 Emulate Cicero  
41 Fat farm  
45 Lock site  
48 To this day  
49 Start of something big?  
53 Lacking vigor or energy  
55 Puppy’s bite  
57 Lad  
58 Toast topping  
59 Fall behind  
62 It might be cut by a politician  
64 Tendon  
66 Vietnamese New

### Year

67 Chop-chop  
72 Airport pickup  
75 Sidekick  
76 Fortune teller’s opening  
77 Polecat’s defense  
78 Russian internment camp  
79 \_\_\_\_\_majesté  
80 Emily of “Our Town”

### make miso

27 Take a powder  
28 Rap sheet letters  
29 “\_\_\_\_\_lost!”  
30 Broke bread  
33 Sinuous swimmer  
35 “Alley \_\_\_\_\_”  
37 “Naughty you!”  
39 It’s often sloppy  
42 Philip Roth’s “\_\_\_\_\_, the Fanatic”  
43 Lady lobster  
44 Recipe direction  
45 Upper limit  
46 Book collector’s suffix  
47 Butterfly catcher  
50 It’s outgoing  
51 Moo \_\_\_\_\_gai pan  
52 Novelist Rand  
54 History Muse  
56 Plum’s center  
60 Percussion instrument  
61 Skein formers  
63 Not on deck  
64 Urban haze  
65 Afflictions  
67 Kind of order  
68 It’ll never get off the ground  
69 Kay Kyser’s “\_\_\_\_\_Reveille”  
70 “\_\_\_\_\_Point,” Guam  
71 Born  
73 Unruly crowd  
74 Heavenly body

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